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Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights

Third periodic report submitted by Estonia under articles 16 and 17 of the Covenant, due in 2016*, **

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** The annexes to the present report are available for consultation from the Committee secretariat. They may also be accessed from the web page of the Committee.

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Introduction

1. The Republic of Estonia acceded to the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights on 21 October 1991 and it entered into force in respect of Estonia on 21 January 1992. Estonia submitted its first report on the implementation of the Covenant in 2001 and the second report in 2008. The Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights discussed it on 15 and 16 November 2011 and adopted its concluding observations on 2 December 2011.

2. This Report is submitted on the basis of Articles 16 and 17 of the Covenant. The Report covers the period from 2008 to early 2017 and it follows the order of the articles of the Covenant. Considering the word limit established by the General Assembly, the Report focuses on the articles covered by the recommendations of the Committee. All figures and tables are given in the Annex to the Report.

3. The Report was prepared by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in cooperation with the Ministry of Education and Research, the Ministry of Culture, the Ministry of Economic Affairs and Communications and the Ministry of Social Affairs. The draft Report was also submitted for consultation to the Chancellor of Justice and relevant non-governmental organisations: the Estonian Institute of Human Rights, the Human Rights Centre and the Legal Information Centre for Human Rights.

4. Estonia submitted its first Common Core Document in 2001 and its updated version on 4 December 2015, thereby complying with the Committee recommendation in point 37.

General developments

Training judges to guarantee the rights arising from the Covenant (point 6 of the recommendations)

5. Point 6 of the recommendations raises some concerns regarding the direct applicability of the Covenant in Estonian courts. The questions related to the direct applicability are covered in greater detail in the overview of the implementation of human rights conventions submitted by Estonia in 2015 (the Common Core Document) and are not discussed in length in this Report.

6. In the recommendations, Estonia was advised to organise training programmes for judges in order to better guarantee the rights arising from the Covenant. Several training events for judges have taken place, which have covered aspects of international, European Union (EU) and national law, on topics such as child welfare, domestic violence and case-law of the European Court of Human Rights. Estonian judges have also participated in several foreign training events related to conflicts of norms in the application of fundamental rights, human rights and access to justice in the EU and EU gender equality law. All these training events have also contributed to the application of the rights enshrined in the Covenant.

Chancellor of Justice (point 7)

7. In point 7 of the recommendations, the Committee advised Estonia to apply for the accreditation of the Chancellor of Justice as a National Human Rights Institution (NHRI) complying with the Paris Principles. The political will and readiness to initiate the accreditation procedure has recently been found and necessary preparations have started.

Ratification of conventions (point 35)

8. Since the submission of its previous report, Estonia has ratified several conventions on human rights. The Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and its Optional Protocol entered into force in respect of Estonia on 22 July 2012, the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the Involvement of Children in Armed Conflict on 12 March 2014, the Council of Europe Convention on Action against

Trafficking in Human Beings on 1 June 2015 and the Council of Europe Convention on the Protection of Children against Sexual Exploitation and Sexual Abuse on 1 March 2017.

Article 2

Situation of non-citizens (point 9)

9. The number of persons with undetermined citizenship living in Estonia as of 1 January 2017 was 79,438, which is 5.9% of the Estonian population. Several important amendments to the Citizenship Act which facilitated the acquisition of Estonian citizenship entered into force in 2015 and 2016. Amendments to the Aliens Act, which allow persons to be granted long-term residence permits under favourable conditions, also entered into force in 2016.

10. Amendments to the Citizenship Act which made the acquisition of Estonian citizenship easier for persons over 65 years of age entered into force on 13 February 2015. The amendments simplified the Estonian language exam requirements for persons over 65 years of age, which means that they now have to pass an oral exam in the Estonian language when applying for Estonian citizenship, but are exempt from the obligation to pass a written exam.

11. Amendments to the Citizenship Act which made the acquisition of Estonian citizenship easier for persons under 15 years of age entered into force on 1 January 2016. Several procedural requirements for the acquisition of citizenship by naturalisation were also simplified. According to the amendments, children under the age of 15 with undetermined citizenship will automatically acquire Estonian citizenship from the moment of their birth without their parents having to request this. This means that a minor under 15 years of age who was born in Estonia after 1 January 2016 or who immediately after birth takes up permanent residence in Estonia together with one or both of his or her parents is granted Estonian citizenship by naturalisation as of the moment of his or her birth, provided that his or her parents or single parent with undetermined citizenship have or has lawfully resided in Estonia for at least five years by the time of the child's birth.

12. In addition, children under the age of 15 with undetermined citizenship were automatically granted Estonian citizenship without their parents having to request this as of 1 January 2016 if both of their parents were with undetermined citizenship and had lawfully resided in Estonia for at least five years. There were 757 children with undetermined citizenship as of 1 January 2016.

13. If the parents or single parent with undetermined citizenship did not want their minor child to acquire Estonian citizenship in such a manner, they could waive it within a period of one year by submitting a relevant request to the Police and Border Guard Board. In such a case, the child was retroactively deemed to be a person with undetermined citizenship, but the child can restore his or her Estonian citizenship later should he or she wish to do so. Within one year, parents of only 25 children of 757 waived the automatically acquired citizenship of their child.

14. Depriving a child of Estonian citizenship is prevented by the amendments to the Citizenship Act that entered into force on 1 January 2016. A person who as a minor acquires both Estonian citizenship by naturalisation as well as the citizenship of another state will not be deprived of the Estonian citizenship, but must renounce either the Estonian citizenship or the citizenship of the other state within three years of attaining the age of 18. Also, as of 1 January 2016 the requirement of release from previous citizenship does not apply to a person who has been granted international protection by Estonia or another Member State of the European Union and the situation in their country of origin has not changed.

15. The conditions of acquiring Estonian citizenship by naturalisation were also simplified with the amendments to the Citizenship Act that entered into force on 1 January 2016. The requirements of a six-month waiting period and of proving the release from previous citizenship were abandoned. The requirement of five years of continuous permanent residence in Estonia in order to acquire citizenship was also abandoned. The

only significant requirement is that the applicant must have lived in Estonia permanently for five of the eight years before applying for citizenship.

16. In addition, amendments to the Aliens Act entered into force on 1 January 2016 which state that a long-term residence permit can be granted on favourable conditions to an alien who settled in Estonia before 1 July 1990 and who has factually resided and resides in Estonia and has not left to settle in another state and whose residence in Estonia does not pose a threat to the interests of Estonia. Favourable conditions mean that those who settled in Estonia before 1 July 1990 and who have factually resided and continue to reside in Estonia and whose residence in Estonia does not pose a threat to the interests of the Estonian state are exempt from all of the requirements of applying for a long-term residence permit, incl. the requirement of Estonian language proficiency.

Unemployment rate among non-Estonians (point 10)

17. The unemployment rate among non-Estonians is somewhat higher than that among Estonians. Unemployment increased sharply among both Estonians and non-Estonians during the recession, peaking in 2010 when the unemployment rate reached 13.3% among Estonians and 23.4% among non-Estonians. (See Table 1 and Figure 1.)

18. Unemployment has decreased consistently since 2011, and this decrease has been faster among non-Estonians (from 23% in 2010 to 10.8% in 2014) than among Estonians. The unemployment rate in 2016 was 5.5% among Estonians and 9.7% among non-Estonians.

19. The unemployment rate is also lower among residents of other ethnic groups who are proficient in spoken and written Estonian (8% in 2014) — it is just two percentage points higher than the unemployment rate among Estonians (6%). The difference in unemployment rates has also decreased between the main population and immigrant population: when the unemployment rate among the immigrant population was 6.2 percentage points higher in 2012, the difference in 2015 was 2.5 percentage points.

20. When the annual equivalent income of people belonging to ethnic minorities in 2013 was 21% lower than the income of Estonians, the difference had fallen to 18% by 2015. The inadequate language proficiency of people belonging to ethnic minorities is not the only or not even the main reason for this — it is the lack of work in certain industries and professions, especially in Ida-Viru County, where a number of industrial companies have been closed, and also the low mobility of the labour force. Income in other peripheral areas of Estonia also tends to be lower.

Measures for reducing unemployment among non-Estonians

21. The Labour Market Services and Benefits Act recognizes unemployed persons who are not proficient in Estonian and whose employment prospects are, therefore, poorer as a risk group on the labour market. The Unemployment Insurance Fund provides people belonging to ethnic minorities with labour market services according to their individual needs and obstacles to enter the labour market in order to bring them to the labour market and help them find work.

22. The share of people who received labour market services among unemployed persons whose main language of communication is not Estonian was 34.5% in 2015. The total number of persons whose main language of communication is not Estonian and who received labour market services in 2015 was 15,874. The services most used by the target group were labour market training (23% of all services), career counselling (20%) and job-seeking workshops (16%). These services are also the most extensively provided services by the Unemployment Insurance Fund.

23. The Fund also offers Estonian language and professional training courses with an Estonian language module for unemployed persons for whom finding a job is difficult due to their inadequate or poor proficiency in Estonian. Approximately 7000 people started language training via the Unemployment Insurance Fund between 2011 and 2015, and the number in 2016 was *ca* 1500.

24. Activities designed to help non-Estonians (incl. permanent Russian-speaking residents and new immigrants) find work are planned in the Welfare Development Plan 2016-2023. In order to reduce the unemployment risks and improve the labour market position of non-Estonian residents, it is important to support the achievement of good Estonian language proficiency and general integration.[1] In order to reduce the obstacles to entering the labour market and support employment, the Welfare Development Plan aims to raise the awareness of employers and to reduce prejudice against various target groups (incl. people with other native languages).

25. Activities that aim to increase the readiness and ability of employers to manage diversity and take the principles of equal treatment into consideration (incl. the development of a "diverse place of work" label) are being developed. The goal set by the Welfare Development Plan is to increase the employment rate of people belonging to ethnic minorities from the current 61.8% to 62.1% by 2020 and to maintain the difference between the employment rates of Estonians and people belonging to ethnic minorities at a ratio not higher than 1.5. The public procurement for fulfilling the goals set out in the Development Plan was won by the non-governmental organisation Estonian Human Rights Centre.

26. In 2015, the Ministry of Culture commissioned an integrated database from Statistics Estonia which provides access to the indicators required for assessing the socioeconomic integration of people whose native language is not Estonian. Since the completion of the database in late 2015, it has also been possible to thoroughly analyse the level of education, labour market participation and socioeconomic status of the Estonian population on the basis of such indicators as language spoken at home, country of origin and immigration generation.

Regional differences

27. Unemployment is characterised by regional differences, and its rate in some regions is more than twice as high as in others. In terms of counties, the unemployment rate was highest in Ida-Viru County (11%) and Lääne County (11%) in 2015. The unemployment rate in Ida-Viru County, which has a large proportion of non-Estonian residents, has been one of the highest in the country since Estonia regained its independence. This has a significant impact on the unemployment rate of non-Estonians nationwide.

28. Although the unemployment rate is highest in North-eastern Estonia,[2] it has been decreasing in the region for the last five years. The employment rate has also increased, but it is still one of the lowest in comparison with other counties. (See Figure 2.)

29. The Government has planned special measures for Ida-Viru County due to the complicated labour market situation in the region — unemployment in the region remains the highest in Estonia, and the situation has been made even more difficult by the mass redundancies in oil shale and chemical companies in the second half of 2015 and the first half of 2016.

30. Job creation support — which is paid to employers who hire at least 20 people at a time from among unemployed people registered in Ida-Viru County who have been unemployed for at least six months — was created with the amendments to the Employment Programme 2016-2017. This is a temporary measure that is available until 31 December 2017. The job creation support motivates entrepreneurs to create jobs in Ida-Viru County, as it reduces the employer's risks and costs upon the recruitment of new employees and during the first year of their employment.

31. An application is also being submitted to the European Commission for the provision of additional labour market services with the support of the European Globalisation Adjustment Fund. The support will be used to finance the labour market

[1] See the Strategy of Integration and Social Cohesion in Estonia "Integrating Estonia 2020".

[2] Estonia has been divided into five regions for statistical purposes: Northern Estonia: Harju County (incl. Tallinn), Central Estonia: Rapla, Järva and Lääne-Viru counties, North-eastern Estonia: Ida-Viru County, Western Estonia: Lääne, Hiiu, Saare and Pärnu counties, and Southern Estonia: Jõgeva, Tartu, Viljandi, Põlva, Valga and Võru counties.

services needed by laid-off workers in Ida-Viru County: retraining, in-service training, mobility support and additional Estonian language training.

32. The Ida-Viru County Action Plan 2015-2020[3] supports the development of Ida-Viru County as a strategically important region of Estonia. The main goal of the action plan is to make Ida-Viru County a region with a good reputation, modern economy and diverse living environment that is well integrated with the rest of Estonia. Among others, the action plan contains activities for the establishment of a cohesive and secure social environment and strengthening civil society.

33. The relevant provisions of the Estonian Constitution which were referred to in the last-but-one report have not been repeated in this section.

Language requirements

34. According to Section 10 of the Equal Treatment Act, a difference of treatment on the basis of language proficiency does not constitute discrimination where, by reason of the nature of the particular occupational activities concerned or of the context in which they are carried out, such language proficiency constitutes a genuine and determining occupational requirement, and its aim is legitimate and proportionate.

35. The language proficiency level as set out in the Government of the Republic Regulation No 84 of 20 June 2011 "Estonian language proficiency and usage requirements of officials, workers and sole traders" was determined on the basis of the nature of work and the language usage contexts of a particular job or position, the attestation requirements of the main groups of positions and the language proficiency requirements set out in processional standards, i.e. a lower language proficiency level (A2-B1) is required in simpler jobs with less demanding communication situations (e.g. guards and service staff). Higher language proficiency (B2-C1) is required in more demanding positions (physicians, teachers and state officials). Official state language skills form an inseparable part of a professional qualification, and the higher the qualification required by a position, the higher the language proficiency level required in the position. Whereas general language proficiency is tested during examinations at lower proficiency levels (A2 and B1), the spoken part of language examinations at higher proficiency levels (B2 and C1) is related to the person's field of work.

36. The Adult Education Act, which helps to improve the level of language courses, entered into force on 1 July 2015. The Language Inspectorate was granted the right to inspect the level of the courses that prepare people for Estonian language proficiency exams, and the language proficiency of the persons who carry out in-service training in the Estonian language must be at the highest level, i.e. C1. The opportunities and need to extend the authority of the Language Inspectorate were analysed on the initiative of the Ministry of Education and Research in order to improve cooperation between the agencies, authorities and officials engaged in the organisation of state language training.

Equal treatment (point 8)

Equal Treatment Act

37. Pursuant to Section 12 of the Constitution of the Republic of Estonia, no one may be discriminated against on the basis of nationality, race, colour, gender, language, origins, religion, political or other views, property or social status, or on any other grounds. The provision of the Constitution is non-exhaustive and the prohibited grounds for discrimination listed in Article 2, paragraph 2 of the Covenant are covered by the provision.

38. Section 1, sub-section 1 of the Equal Treatment Act prohibits discrimination on the grounds of nationality (ethnic origin), race, colour, religion or other beliefs, age, disability or sexual orientation. Pursuant to Section 2, sub-section 3, the requirements of equal treatment may also be applied on the grounds of any characteristic not specified above, in particular due to family-related duties, social status, representation of the interests of

[3] Accessible online: www.fin.ee/ida-virumaa-tegevuskava-2015-2020.

employees or membership of an organisation of employees, level of language proficiency or duty to serve in the defence forces. The Equal Treatment Act prohibits discrimination on the grounds of language in employment relationships.

39. Section 3 of the Employment Contracts Act requires employers to guarantee that employees are protected from discrimination, to observe the principle of equal treatment and to promote equality pursuant to the Equal Treatment Act and the Gender Equality Act.

40. The Ministry of Social Affairs is currently working on an amendment to the Equal Treatment Act to extend the scope of application of the Act equally to all protected groups. The current Equal Treatment Act differentiates its scope of application for different protected groups. While discrimination on the grounds of religion or views, age, disability or sexual orientation is only prohibited in respect of issues related to working life and upon the acquisition of professional qualifications, prohibition of discrimination on the grounds of nationality (ethnic origin), race or skin colour is broader and it applies in the contexts of social welfare, health care and social insurance services and allowances, education and the goods and services (incl. housing) offered to the public. Extending the scope of application will help improve the legal protection of all minorities listed in the Act.

41. The Equal Treatment Act is also being amended in relation to the transposition of EU Directive 2014/54, which requires Estonia to apply the provisions of equal treatment in the case of discrimination on the grounds of citizenship of an EU Member States using the right of free movement in the EU. Transposition of the Directive requires adding the citizenship of an EU Member State as a characteristic of discrimination to Section 1 of the Equal Treatment Act. This means that citizens of EU Member States who exercise the right of free movement will be able to turn to the Gender Equality and Equal Treatment Commissioner in the event of discrimination. (See Tables 2-4.)

Measures against discrimination

42. The Office of the Gender Equality and Equal Treatment Commissioner was engaged in strategic litigation within the scope of the project "Achieving gender equality with gender integration and legal protection" between 2013 to 2016. Strategic litigation entailed the Office of the Commissioner making a selection of cases related to discrimination, providing help to the victims of these cases with their litigation and organising legal assistance for them. The small number of court rulings in cases of discrimination was one of the reasons that triggered the launching of strategic litigation in discrimination disputes.

43. Legal disputes where people were unequally treated on the grounds of pregnancy, parenthood or other aspects related to gender were financed via the project. One person was the victim in two disputes. Four disputes were related to discrimination on the grounds of pregnancy, three on the grounds of parenthood, one on the grounds of sexual harassment in employment relationships and one to the protection of the rights of a transgender person in changing personal name.

Article 3

Gender equality in employment (point 14)

44. The state and other stakeholders have implemented a number of programmes and projects during the reporting period for the promotion of gender equality in employment. This includes two large-scale projects of the European Social Fund (ESF) for the promotion of gender equality between 2008 and 2015 and the gender equality and reconciliation of work and family life programme financed between 2012 and 2016 from the funds of the Norway Grants 2009-2014. The budget of the programme is EUR 2,352,941. Activities are financed from the programme via predefined projects, projects of an open call for proposals and small projects.

45. In September 2011, the Parliament of Estonia — the Riigikogu — adopted a decision in which it suggested the Government to develop an action plan for reducing the gender pay gap. The Government approved the action plan in summer 2012. This proceeds from the assumption that was also highlighted in the pay gap survey — namely that the

gender pay gap in Estonia is the result of the confluence of several different reasons. Five goals were set in the action plan:

- Better implementation of the Gender Equality Act (e.g. better collection of statistics, raising awareness and supporting the work of the Gender Equality and Equal Treatment Commissioner);
- Improving opportunities for the reconciling of work and family life (e.g. activities aimed at employers);
- Gender integration, especially in the field of education;
- Reducing gender segregation; and
- Analysing organisational practices and wage systems in the public sector.

46. The formation of the Gender Equality Council by the Government of the Republic in October 2013 can be highlighted as an important development in the field of gender equality. The Council is a broad-based and high-level advisory body that advises the Government on strategic issues of promoting gender equality. The Council consists of 22 members, including the main umbrella organisations of workers, employers and local governments; the main women's organisations; the Network of Estonian Non-profit Organisations; the main organisations of school and university students; representatives of the rectors of public universities; state agencies from the fields of statistics, public health, lifelong learning and employment support; the Gender Equality and Equal Treatment Commissioner; and from all political parties represented in the Riigikogu. So far, the Gender Equality Council has given its opinion on the need for a gender equality strategy and submitted proposals to the parties elected to the Riigikogu in spring 2015 for the promotion of gender equality from 2015 to 2018. The first stage of the survey of implementation of the Gender Equality Act was carried out at the request of the Council in 2015 and focused on the awareness, attitudes and activities of employers.

47. In 2016, the Government of the Republic approved the Welfare Development Plan for 2016-2023 along with its implementation plan. The plan was developed under the coordination of the Ministry of Social Affairs. The development plan sets out the strategic goals of labour policy, social protection policy and gender equality policy, giving a comprehensive overview of the main problems, trends and goals in these policy areas. The main focus areas of the gender equality policy in the coming years include supporting the equal economic independence of men and women and increasing the gender balance at all decision-making and management levels; reducing gender stereotypes and their negative impact on the daily lives of men and women, on decisions and on the development of the economy and society; and guaranteeing institutional capacity for reducing gender inequality and for promoting gender equality, incl. better implementation of legal protection and gender integration.

Breaking stereotypes (point 11)

48. In 2010 and 2013, the Ministry of Social Affairs initiated media campaigns promoting gender equality within the scope of the gender equality programme of the European Social Fund (ESF). The campaigns focused on traditional gender stereotypes, incl. in relation to professional and career choices. Seven video clips were created within the scope of the 2013 media campaign which depicted everyday situations influenced by stereotypes so as to make people notice and recognise the negative impact of the dated stereotypes. The topics of the clips included unequal pay for equal work, gender segregation on the labour market, stereotypes that influence the opportunities of women and men to reconcile work and family life, have a career, etc. Since the videos became popular, they are still used to support communication aimed at reducing gender stereotypes.

49. Career days for young people were also carried out in 2013 and 2015, coordinated by the Ministry of Social Affairs within the scope of the gender equality programme of the ESF, where the traditionally "women's specialties" were introduced to boys and "men's specialties" to girls. The goal of the event was to introduce to secondary school students career choices free from gender stereotypes, to provide them with good examples on

persons who had made such choices and to encourage them not to be influenced by stereotypes when choosing a profession and career.

50. Since the establishment of the institution of the Gender Equality and Equal Treatment Commissioner in October 2005, the funds allocated to the Commissioner from the state budget have increased from 51,705 euros in 2006 (the first full year) to 339,697 euros in 2016. The addition of duties has also influenced the increase in the budget to a small extent. The competency of the Commissioner was broadened with the Gender Equality Act that entered into force in early 2009. In addition to gender equality the capacity of the Commissioner now covers equal treatment on the basis of nationality (ethnic origin), race, skin colour, religion or political views, age, disability and sexual orientation.

51. The Commissioner has also been able to request additional funding from the EU and other financing mechanisms. From 2013 to 2016 (first quarter), the Commissioner carried out a project with a budget of 700,000 euros within the scope of the gender equality and work and family life reconciliation programme of the Norway Grants 2009-2014, which was coordinated by the Ministry of Social Affairs. The extra funding was also used to hire additional staff for the implementation of the project. The current staff consists of 8 employees.

Article 6

Overall employment and unemployment (points 11, 13 and 14)

Employment

52. The Estonian labour market survived major changes from 2007 to 2015. The employment rate among people aged 20-64 decreased rapidly after the global financial crisis that started in 2008, dropping from 76.7% (2008) to 66.5% (2010). The employment rate started to increase gradually in 2011 due to the improvement in economic conditions, reaching 76.2% in 2015. Estonia has thus exceeded its goal of 76% set for 2020.

53. The total number of employed people in the 15-74 age group decreased by 16,700 between 2007 and 2015, with the population decreasing by 67,600 in the same period. Employment decreased the most in the construction and processing industry during the economic crisis and the decrease in employment among men was therefore greater during the crisis than that among women. This also explained why the number of women in the total number of employed persons in 2010 was higher than men. The number of employed persons increased among both men and women between 2011 and 2015. The gradual increase in the retirement age has also influenced the increase of employment among women, as women are leaving the labour market at a later age than before. (See Table 5 and Figure 3.)

54. According to Eurostat, the employment rate among people aged 20-64 is one of the highest in the European Union, as Estonia shares 4th and 5th place. The employment rate of women places Estonia in joint 3rd and 4th place.

Unemployment

55. The labour market has undergone massive changes in the last 10 years. According to the labour force survey, unemployment in Estonia was lowest during the economic boom of 2007 (*ca* 32,000 unemployed persons). The recession that followed increased the number of unemployed persons to a record level of 114,000 in 2010. Since 2011, unemployment has decreased steadily among men and women alike due to the favourable economic conditions. The number of unemployed persons in 2016 was *ca* 47,000 and the unemployment rate was 6.8%.

56. Unemployment in Estonia is mainly structural, which means that people's level of education, skills and work experience are not meeting the rapidly changing requirements of the labour market. The average level of education among the unemployed is considerably lower than that among the employed. The lower the level of education, the higher the rate of unemployment and the longer it takes to find a job. The labour market needs skilled

workers and specialists, but most unemployed persons only have basic or general secondary education (43% in total) and no professional skills.

57. Unemployment among men in Estonia has always been somewhat higher than among women. In 2015, however, the unemployment rate among men and women became almost equal (6.2% and 6.1%, respectively).

58. The number of registered unemployed persons — which has always been considerably lower than the number of unemployed persons obtained in labour force surveys, as not all unemployed persons register themselves as unemployed in the Unemployment Insurance Fund — has also increased rapidly. (See Table 6 and Figure 4.)

59. Approximately two-fifths (38%) of unemployed persons have been seeking work for a year or longer, which makes their reintegration into the labour market more difficult. Long-term unemployment decreased more rapidly than short-term unemployment during the recovery from the recession: more than three times more rapidly. The number of people unemployed for a long period was 51,600 in 2010, but had decreased to 16,200 in 2015 (7,300 men and 8,900 women). (See Table 7 and Figure 5.)

60. In addition to the long-term unemployed, the number of people who have given up looking for work has also decreased (6,100 in 2015), which indicates that the decrease in long-term unemployment is not the result of people giving up futile job-seeking. The number of people who gave up increased during the recession, but then started decreasing again. The number of such people has remained around 6,000 in the last three years (2013-2015).

61. The expenses of labour market policy in 2015 amounted to 131.18 million euros, comprising 0.64% of GDP. In comparison to 2014, labour market policy expenses have increased by 15.3 million euros. (See Table 8.)

Employment of disabled persons (point 15)

62. The unemployment rate among disabled people according to the labour force survey of 2008 was 33.3%. The total number of disabled persons was 111.1 thousand, 37.0 thousand of whom were employed and 5.6 thousand of whom were unemployed. The employment rate fell to 29.1% in 2011 as a result of the recession. The number of disabled people fell to 105.9 thousand and the number of employed persons to 30.9 thousand. The number of unemployed persons, however, more than doubled, reaching 13.5 thousand. (See Table 9.)

63. As the method for collecting statistics about disabled people and people with diminished capacity for work changed in 2008, the labour market indicators of disabled people also cover those who have been declared disabled or permanently incapacitated for work (or both) with a resolution of the Social Insurance Board. (See Table 10.)

64. Active work to keep the disabled persons, incl. persons with permanent partial work capacity, on the labour market and to help them return to the market has led to improvements in the employment of disabled persons, with their employment rate having increased since 2011. The unemployment rate and the number of unemployed persons have decreased at the same time.

65. As previously stated regarding the employment statistics of disabled persons and persons with diminished capacity for work, the employment rate of disabled persons and persons who were permanently with partial work capacity has increased since the recession. Specific labour market services are provided in addition to general labour market services in order to improve employment in this target group. The last of these services were added to the package on 1 January 2016. These services are necessary due to the decrease in people's capacity for work (disability or long-term ailment) and prior to 2016 included adaptation of working premises and equipment, provision of technical aid necessary for working, working with a support person and assistance during job interviews. New labour market services aimed at the target group of the work capacity reform have also been included in the package of specific labour market services: work-related rehabilitation, sheltered employment, experience counselling, support for travelling to work and compensation of the travel costs of an accompanying person.

66. The Work Capacity Allowance Act entered into force on 1 July 2016. The reform of the work capacity allowance system will end the assessment of the percentage of permanent loss of capacity for work and launch the assessment of capacity for work. The assessment of capacity for work shows whether a person has full capacity for work, partial capacity for work or no capacity for work. Health care service providers who are competent to assess which types of work or working conditions are suitable for a person considering their health status will be involved in the assessment of capacity for work. Carrying out medical examinations to prevent and/or reduce health risks and detecting any health disorders caused by work as early as possible also fall within their competence. The assessment will also form the basis for giving advice about work and, if necessary, assistance to the employer. People with partial or no capacity for work will be paid a work capacity allowance, but in the case of people with partial capacity for work, the payment of the allowance will depend on their compliance with activity requirements. The amount of the allowance and its payment depends on the wage, if the person works.

67. The second important cornerstone of the work capacity reform is increasing the provision of social services and improving the quality of those services. In order to improve the quality and effectiveness of rehabilitation services, they were divided in two in 2016:

- Professional rehabilitation is a labour market service that helps people look for work, get employed and develop professionally; and
- Social rehabilitation is a social service that supports coping in everyday life, such as independent living, education, participation in society and developing the premises required for work.

68. This division makes it possible to offer better targeted services in order to achieve higher efficiency. People with partial capacity for work are provided with rehabilitation services related to their (likely) place of work. The maximum price of the service per person may increase (up to 1,500 euros) in comparison with the current budget and therefore allow clients to receive more services with shorter waiting times. Children, the elderly and disabled people will be provided with services that improve their ability to cope socially.

69. The reform of rehabilitation services helps create equal access to necessary and timely services and gives people a clear overview of the services provided and movement between them. The confluence of the rehabilitation services provided in the field of social affairs, employment and health care will also improve, as the duplication of services will be precluded, the gaps between the services will be covered, etc.

70. The reform of technical aids that entered into force in 2016 transferred the organisation of the allocation of technical aids to the Social Insurance Board, and the budget of the technical aids was changed from county-based to national. The reform increased people's right to make decisions by giving them the freedom to choose a suitable service and service provider anywhere in the country. The reform has also helped reduce inequality, as receiving a technical aid and the scale of help no longer depend on the region of Estonia where the person lives or the price of the technical aid they choose, and has created clear competition between companies with an effect of giving smaller companies more opportunities on the market as well. The improvement of the system will continue and electronic organisation of the system will be introduced in 2017. This will allow people to contact the company that sells or rents out technical aids immediately after doctor's visit.

71. The new Social Welfare Act that entered into force in 2016 stipulated minimum requirements for the social services that are provided by local governments. The purpose and content of the services, the obligations of local governments upon the provision of services and requirements for service providers were established at the level of law. The obligation of local governments to assess people's need for assistance and to provide assistance corresponding to needs was also strengthened with the Act.

72. Since 2007 the accessibility and quality of the social services of local governments has been supported by various projects of the European Social Fund. The purpose of these projects has been to support independent coping of disabled and elderly people and the employment opportunities of their caretakers. The funding received from the European

Social Fund is used to increase the development and provision of social services (e.g. home service, support person service, personal assistance service, day care service and interval care service) via cooperation between local governments. Competitions for ideas for innovative social services and service piloting is organised in order to find cost-effective solutions.

73. The Astangu Environmental Adaptations and Technical Aids Information Centre offers free counselling on the adaptation of working environments in cooperation with the Unemployment Insurance Fund. The Fund compensates the adaptation of a workplace partially or fully if a disabled person is hired with an employment contract entered into for an unspecified term or for at least three years.

74. The effective daily rate of the work capacity allowance is 11.25 euros, of which the allowance per calendar day in the case of partial capacity for work is 57% of the effective daily rate (6.41 euros per day, *ca* 192 euros per month) or 100% of the effective rate in the case of no capacity for work (11.25 euros per day, *ca* 337 euros per month).

75. The cooperation agreement on social protection for people with disabilities and health damage signed by 12 partnership organisations of the Ministry of Social Affairs in November 2014 contributes directly to the smooth implementation of the work capacity reform. The cooperation agreement laid down necessary socio-political courses of action and activities in order to facilitate the adoption of fundamental choices and decisions on how to provide better support to people with disabilities and health damage.

76. On 30 March 2012, the Government of Estonia and the representative organisations of disabled persons signed a memorandum of cooperation principles which aim to facilitate greater involvement of the organisations in the state's decision-making processes. The memorandum stipulates the principles of involving disabled persons and consulting them in all policy areas with special attention to education, employment, the environment, transport, infrastructure, accessibility of information, participation in cultural life and social protection. The cooperation council of ministries and representative organisations of disabled persons was established in order to raise awareness of the topics related to disabled persons, coordinate the activities required for guaranteeing the rights of disabled people and set strategic priorities and goals.

Work by prisoners (point 12)

77. The Government's position regarding the obligation of convicted persons to work were submitted to the Committee in the second periodic report. Point 145 of the second report explains that the obligation of prisoners to work cannot be construed as forced or compulsory work prohibited by the Covenant, which is also prohibited according to Estonian law and several international agreements. Pursuant to section 29, sub-section 2 of the Constitution of Estonia, nobody may be compelled to perform work or service against his or her free will, except work which a convict must perform on the basis of and pursuant to the procedure established by law. The consent of a prisoner is more specifically guaranteed by Section 37, sub-section 5 of the Imprisonment Act. ILO Forced or Compulsory Labour Convention No. 29 does not include as forced or compulsory labour any work or service exacted from any person as a consequence of a conviction in a court of law, provided that said work or service is carried out under the supervision and control of a public authority and that said person is not hired for or placed at the disposal of private individuals, companies or associations (Article 2, paragraph 2, sub-paragraph c of the ILO Convention, point 147 of the second report). The European Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms (the ECHR) stipulates a similar exception.

78. Forced or compulsory labour shall not include any work required to be done in the ordinary course of detention (Article 4, paragraph 3, sub-paragraph a of the ECHR; point 146 of the second report). Detainees may only be engaged in work on a voluntary basis.

79. According to Estonian imprisonment law, the obligation of a detainee to work is not unlimited. Working in prison — including working conditions, pensions for incapacity to work, release from obligation to work and remuneration of the work of prisoners — is regulated in detail (point 149 of the second report). The obligation of prisoners to work has a constitutional basis and serves an important goal, which is the reintegration of the

detainee into society. Based on the above, amending the effective legislation was not considered necessary (point 152 of the second report).

80. There is no obligation under international law to allow work by convicted persons exclusively on a voluntary basis. Protection of the human and fundamental rights of prisoners is guaranteed by the principles arising from the relevant international agreements and the national occupational health and safety laws that comply with them. This is why the effective procedure complies with all international obligations of Estonia.

Article 7

Wages (points 13 and 16)

81. The basis for determining wages in an employment relationship has not changed in comparison with the previous reporting period. Wages stipulated in the employment contract must at least correspond to the national minimum wage. The minimum wage statistics indicate that the minimum wage has increased steadily since 2011. In addition, the action programme of the Government of Estonia for 2016-2019 contains several activities for making it easier for people on low incomes to cope. In parallel with the implementation of state measures, the proposal will be made to labour market participants to increase the minimum wage to at least 45% of the average wage within four years. The new composition of the Government that took up office in 2016 has promised to increase the tax-free threshold to 500 euros.

82. According to the Tax and Customs Board, the share of people earning the minimum wage (470 euros) in the first quarter of 2017 was the biggest in retail, wholesale and repair of motor vehicles (17%), construction (13%) and processing industry (11%).

83. The average wage had increased 1.5 times by 2015 compared to 2007. The minimum wage increased 1.7 times at the same time. Thus, the minimum wage increased more rapidly than the average wage during the reporting period. In 2015, the minimum wage comprised 37% of the average gross monthly wage. (See Tables 11-14.)

84. The Labour Inspectorate carries out state supervision of whether the wages stipulated in employment contracts correspond to the minimum wage established by the state. In the case of non-correspondence, the labour inspector has the right to issue a precept for bringing the wages into line with the minimum wage requirement.

85. A total of 1,761 violations of the Employment Contract Act were identified in 2015, up from 1,437 the year before. 79% of the violations were about notification of employee of working conditions, with violations relating to wage included among them. 16% were about working and rest time restrictions.

Article 8

The right to strike (point 17)

86. The right to strike is regulated by the Collective Labour Dispute Resolution Act. The Act was amended in 2015 regarding the part concerning the institution of the Public Conciliator and removed the institution of the local conciliator. Also, the period of notifying the employer of a sympathy strike was changed from three to five working days.

Article 9

Social insurance (point 18)

87. Social insurance primarily differs from private insurance in terms of its broader goals. An important difference is that risks are collectively shared and certain social protection is guaranteed throughout society. The individual approach of private insurance means, among other things, that the insurance corporation generally assesses risks individually and insurance premiums are differentiated depending on the level of risk. In

social insurance, individual risk is not assessed as a rule. The obligation to pay insurance premiums and the rate of the premium are the same for all insured persons as an expression of solidarity between them.

88. The principles of the social insurance systems effective in Estonia were established on the basis of justified social and solidarity considerations, and the social insurance benefits that replace income from work (replacement incomes) are generally calculated on the basis of the taxes and payments paid in a certain period of time on salaries, wages and other remuneration (income from work).

89. The subsistence benefit, which is the state's financial aid for people in need and which is paid by local governments, can be considered an exception. This benefit is paid to people living below the subsistence level, incl. people without a place of residence, for buying food, clothes and other primary goods and services.

90. The implementation of recommendation 18 is supported by the following changes to the social insurance schemes that were made during the reporting period (as of 1 January 2008).

Pension

91. In order to improve the adequacy of pensions, the procedure for indexing pensions was changed during the reporting period in such a way that it gives greater consideration to the increase in wages and that the pension of people on lower wages increases more rapidly.

92. The retirement age of women was equalised with that of men on 1 January 2016 and people can now retire at the age of 63. As of 1 April 2017, the old-age retirement age will gradually increase to 65 by 2026 (the relevant legal amendment having been adopted in 2016).

Pension for incapacity for work

93. Determination of percentages of the loss of capacity for work and the granting of pensions for incapacity for work have gradually been terminated with the work capacity reform implemented on 1 July 2016. A person's remaining capacity for work will be assessed instead of the previous permanent incapacity for work. In comparison with the expert analysis of permanent incapacity for work, the methodology used for assessing capacity for work is based on completely new grounds, which considers the person's functional and work-related capacity in addition to his or her health status. The new assessment methodology is not linked to percentages of permanent incapacity for work and the previously determined extent of a person's loss of capacity for work is not considered when capacity for work is assessed. Persons with partial capacity for work or no capacity for work are entitled to a work capacity allowance. Capacity for work is assessed and the work capacity allowance is paid by the Unemployment Insurance Fund.

94. Only the capacity for work of those whose loss of capacity for work had not been assessed in the last five years was assessed as of 1 July 2016. In the case of persons who had previously been declared permanently incapacitated for work with a deadline for next assessment in 2016, the permanent loss of the capacity for work was identified according to the previous rules and they are paid a pension for incapacity for work.

95. The pension for incapacity for work as a type of pension was abolished on 1 January 2017 and capacity for work is now assessed according to the new rules. The work capacity allowance is paid in the case of partial or no capacity for work.

Health insurance

96. The time limit on the payment of sickness benefits — which stipulated that an insured person was entitled to receive sickness benefits for a maximum of 250 calendar days per year — was abolished as of 1 January 2016. The change brought Estonian health insurance into line with the requirements of the European Code of Social Security.

97. As of 1 July 2009, the employer pays the sickness benefit to employees and officials pursuant to the Occupational Health and Safety Act for the fourth to eighth day of sickness

or injury in the amount of 70% of the employee's average wage, calculated pursuant to the procedure set out in the Employment Contracts Act. The Health Insurance Fund pays sickness benefits to all working insured persons as of the ninth day of illness.

Family benefits

98. Family benefit schemes are regulated by the State Family Benefits Act of 1 January 2017. The principles of the granting and payment of family benefits remain largely the same as in the previous reporting period, but the amounts of certain family benefits have been increased in recent years.

99. The amount of the child allowance for the first and second child in 2014 was still linked to the child allowance rate and comprised 19.18 euros. In 2015, the allowance for the first and second child increased to 45 euros, and by 2016 it had increased to 50 euros. The child allowance for the first and second child will increase further in the coming years — to 55 euros per child from 1 January 2018 and to 60 euros per child from 1 January 2019.

100. The child allowance paid for the third and subsequent child in a family has since 1 July 2007 been higher than the allowance paid for the first and second child. When the amendment entered into force, the child allowance for the third and each subsequent child was three times higher than the allowance paid for the first and second child, i.e. 57.51 euros. It was increased to 169 euros on 1 January 2015.

101. The amount of the allowance for a child under guardianship or in foster care started increasing significantly as of 2007. It was 57.52 euros in 2006, but had increased to 95.85 euros by 2007, to 191.70 euros by 2008 and to 289 euros as of 1 January 2015. (See Table 15.)

102. The amount of allowance for families with many children is as of 1 July 2017:

- 100 euros for families with 3-6 children;
- 640 euros for families with 7 or more children.

103. The school allowance of children, which was previously 28.76 euros per year, was abolished as of 1 January 2009 as a result of the need for state budget cutbacks, caused by the recession. The allowance was not reintroduced after the stabilisation of the economy; instead, the amount of the monthly universal child allowance was increased.

104. A special one-off allowance for families upon the birth of triplets or a larger number of children was established on 1 January 2013. The amount of the allowance is 1000 euros. (See Table 16.)

105. The period of payment of the parental benefit has increased since 1 January 2008. During the previous reporting period, the benefit was paid from the day following the last day of the maternity benefit period (pregnancy and maternity leave, which lasts for 140 calendar days) until the total, including the days of maternity benefit, amounted to 455 days.

106. On 1 January 2008, the total period of payment of the maternity and parental benefit was increased from 455 days to 575 days. However, this is subject to the condition that the mother goes on pregnancy and maternity leave at least 30 days before the expected date of childbirth determined by a doctor.

107. If the mother does not work and therefore is not entitled to the maternity benefit, she is paid the parental benefit instead until the child reaches the age of 18 months. In the previous reporting period, unemployed mothers were granted benefits until the child reached the age of 14 months.

108. The benefit is reduced after it exceeds the benefit rate. The benefit is reduced by one euro for every two euros earned in excess of the benefit rate. The amount of the benefit is at least half of the benefit granted to the person, but no less than the benefit rate. Such a reduction guarantees that earning a wage is always profitable and the reduction of the benefit is proportional. At least half of the benefit granted to the recipient of the parental benefit or parental benefit in the amount of the benefit rate plus income earned from work is preserved when income is earned.

Maintenance allowance

109. The maintenance allowance is a short-term allowance for a child paid by the state as of 1 January 2008 if the child's parent does not perform his or her maintenance obligation.

110. On 1 January 2017, the period of the maintenance allowance was extended from 90 to 150 days and the daily rate is 100 euros per month per child. Thus the maintenance allowance paid during the court procedure is up to 500 euros instead of the previous maximum of 288 euros.

Dependence of unemployment insurance benefit on reason for termination of employment contract (point 19)

111. A person does not have the right to receive unemployment insurance benefit if the employment contract has been terminated due to professional fault. In such a case, the employment relationship is terminated because of the person's negligent or wilful behaviour and the situation cannot be regarded as if the unemployment were forced-upon to the person. Such a person would still, though, have the right for unemployment allowance which in 2017 is 150.66 euros in a month.

Article 10

Exploitation of children (point 21)

Child pornography

112. The child pornography offences set forth in Articles 2 and 3 of the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the Sale of Children, Child Prostitution and Child Pornography have been criminalised in Estonia and covered by Sections 175, 178 and 179 of the Penal Code. Importantly, the act of grooming is also covered by Section 178 of the Penal Code. The age limit of the protected child in the case of all child pornography offences is 18.

113. The Optional Protocol does not require states to criminalise offences related to child erotica. However, Estonia wishes to offer more protection to children and has, therefore, adopted a broader approach than many other countries, criminalising the manufacturing, acquisition or storing, handing over, displaying or making available to another person in any other manner of pictures, writings or other works or reproductions of works depicting a person of less than 14 years of age in an erotic situation (Section 178). Knowingly observing an erotic performance where a person less than 14 years of age is participating is also criminalised (Section 175).

114. Estonia has not criminalised the participation of persons aged 14-18 in erotic works, as it generally represents the voluntary behaviour of young people of this age, whereby there is no nudity. An example of this is the mutual behaviour of young people when using smart devices, where they use poses that are daring and self-exposing, but lack an element of pornography. This behaviour among young people is permitted as part of their sexual development and the state does not wish to punish people for acts that are voluntary and have no impact outside the person's circle of communication.

115. However, it needs to be stressed that any activity forced on a young person aged 14-18, in any manner whatsoever, is punishable under Section 175 of the Penal Code; when full nudity is involved, it is punishable as child pornography under Section 178. Also, since daring and self-exposing behaviour or contact with pornographic material is not age-appropriate for children younger than 14, then, in the case of external influence, it is possible to punish those who manufacture or distribute such material on the basis of Sections 178 and 179.

Marriages of minors

116. Pursuant to the Estonian Family Law Act, a court may extend the active legal capacity of a person who has attained at least 15 years of age for the performance of acts

required for the contracting of marriage and for the exercising of the rights and performance of the obligations related to marriage. This regulation was recently established due to the need to protect pregnant minors or minors already raising children and to give the underage mother and her child the opportunity to belong to a family and thereby protect them from possible social exclusion. However, due to the reproaches made against Estonia due to the low permitted age of marriage, the legislator considered amending the regulation in 2013 in such a way that marriages between minors would not be possible. This initiative received negative feedback from interest groups, who felt that the interests of the underage person and their child and the child's right to be born and raised in a proper family should be prioritised.

117. Considering the feedback received and the fact that such an extension of active legal capacity is only permitted in exceptional cases after a court has thoroughly assessed the development level of the minor and the situation due to which the minor wishes to marry, and also considered the opinion of the minor's parents and the competent officials of the local government, Estonia sees no legal or social problem in the effective regulation. The court extends the minor's active legal capacity for marriage only if this is in the interests of the minor and is possible considering their level of development. This is also confirmed by statistics: only five marriages where one of the parties was less than 18 years of age were contracted in both 2013 and 2014.

Working time for children under 15

118. On 8 May 2017, the amendments on working time regulation of minors in the Employment Contract Act entered into force. The new regulation permits persons under 15 years of age or older employees who are subject to the obligation to attend school to work for a maximum of two hours a day. During school holidays, a person aged 7-12 is allowed to work for three and a person aged 13-14 is allowed to work for seven hours a day. No minor is permitted to work for more than a half of each term of the school holiday.

Domestic violence (point 20)

119. Violence is punishable in Estonia irrespective of where it occurs or who the perpetrator is. Committing an offence against a person who is in a service or financially dependent relationship with the offender, and against a former or current family member of the offender, against a person who lives with the offender or a person who is otherwise in a family relationship with the offender has been regarded as an aggravating circumstance since December 2013.

120. Several legal amendments concerning domestic violence entered into force on 1 January 2015.

- The list of aggravating circumstances was amended in the Penal Code, which also includes committing of an offence against a former or current family member of the offender (Section 59, sub-section 4 of the Penal Code) or committing of an offence in the presence of a minor (Section 59, sub-section 13 of the Penal Code).
- The elements of physical abuse were specified in the Penal Code and stricter punishment was stipulated for abuse in a close relationship or relationship of subordination — imprisonment of up to five years (Section 121, sub-section 2, clause 2 of the Penal Code).
- The Penal Code was updated with the option to implement a temporary restraining order with electronic surveillance (Section 141, sub-section 11 of the Code of Criminal Procedure).

121. Preparations for the ratification of the Council of Europe Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence (the Istanbul Convention), which concerns the criminalisation of stalking, forced marriages and disfigurement of genitalia, are also ongoing. The first reading of the draft Act on Ratification was accomplished by the Riigikogu on 13 June 2017.

122. Protective measures, incl. in the form of women's shelters, are provided in order to help victims, and as of 1 January 2017 the service of women's shelters is stipulated in the

Victim Support Act. The Victim Support Act stipulates the requirements of service providers and of those directly providing the service, and guarantees supervision and state funding for the service. The service is free for all victims and offers secure temporary accommodation; legal and psychological counselling; or psychotherapy, as necessary.

123. Prevention of violence and other measures in Estonia take place according to the Strategy for Prevention of Violence 2015-2020. Public awareness has been raised through various campaigns and information events (the campaign "Open your eyes" within the scope of the Progress project and "There is no justification for sexual violence" / "NO means NO", "Violence is not love", "Who beats you does not love you", "Shadows" within the scope of the Norwegian Financial Mechanism) and via discussions in the media (press releases, articles and TV and radio interviews). Consistent network training to raise awareness of violence against women and domestic violence was carried out between 2013 and 2016 for specialists who work with victims (e.g. police officers, prosecutors, judges, social workers, victim support officers, child protection officers, medical professionals and teachers). A survey of the awareness and attitudes of the Estonian population, a survey of the spread and awareness of sexual violence and online surveys have been carried out.

124. There are 17 women's shelters and support centres in Estonia and 24/7 helplines for victims of violence against women and persons close to them as well as for victims of trafficking in human beings. Women can also go to support centres with their children. The support centres that are managed by NGOs provide a complete service: temporary accommodation, psychological and legal counselling and information about a variety of services. There is also a crisis centre for men that male victims can turn to for help. There is a free national helpline (1492) for victims of violence against women, which the victims, persons close to them and specialists can call 24/7. The helpline and the women's support centres are both financed from the state budget.

125. The number of reported incidents of violence has increased markedly, as people have become more aware of such issues and the services for victims have developed strongly. In comparison with earlier times, the number of people who have gone to support centres due to domestic violence has been increasing constantly. 1,180 women and 204 children went to support centres in 2011; 1,567 women and 184 children in 2012; 1,564 women and 182 children in 2013; 1,617 women and 186 children in 2014; and 1,763 women and 188 children in 2015.

126. In 2012 the Police and Border Guard Board was still registering *ca* six cases of domestic violence per day; today that number has increased to an average of 32 cases of domestic violence per day nationwide (*ca* 40 cases of violence per day during holidays).

127. The victim support system established in 2005 continues to work: it foresees at least one victim support worker per each county, who is usually working in the same building as the police and offers primary support to victims, organises psychological help and, if necessary, the provision of state compensation for the crime.

128. The system of restraining orders in criminal proceedings was established for the protection of victims from violence in mid-2006. The restraining order can be applied during criminal proceedings (a temporary restraining order) as well as after the proceedings upon the conviction of the perpetrator. The victim can also request a civil law restraining order. A temporary restraining order can be applied with electronic surveillance as of 1 January 2015.

129. In terms of attitudes, surveys indicate that although the majority of Estonian people condemn the use of violence between spouses and partners, 10% of people feel that sometimes it is unavoidable. The youngest (15-24) and oldest (65-74) age groups have a more tolerant attitude towards violence (13% and 16%, respectively); men of ethnic minorities stand out, as 21% of them feel that physically disciplining their partner is sometimes unavoidable. A little over a fifth (21%) of people feel that domestic violence is an internal problem within the family and that strangers should not intervene. According to gender equality monitoring from 2013, a positive change can be seen in comparison with 2009: the proportion of people who are in favour of intervening in a violent domestic fights has increased from 63% to 77%.

Trafficking in human beings (point 32d)

130. In 2013 Estonia transposed Directive 2011/36/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council on preventing and combating trafficking in human beings and protecting its victims. Directive 2011/36/EU replaces Council Framework Decision 2002/629/JHA. Six acts were amended for this purpose, incl. the Victim Support Act, which guaranteed services for victims of trafficking in human beings, and the Aliens Act, which gave people the option to acquire a temporary residence permit in order to participate in criminal proceedings and help prove the circumstances of the offence if the person is a victim or witness in criminal proceedings concerning offences of trafficking in human beings. The amendments entered into force on 28 April 2013.

131. Elements of the crime of trafficking in human beings were included in the Penal Code in 2012, when trafficking in human beings, aiding trafficking in human beings and various crimes related to aiding prostitution and organ donation were criminalised.

132. The state has been financing the helpline for prevention of trafficking in human beings and counselling victims since 2009. Anyone who has suspicions about their employment contracts or employment relationships can call the helpline. The employees of the helpline actively attend job fairs and other public events where they can give people the information necessary for the prevention of trafficking in human beings. Advice is provided in Estonian, Russian and English. The fight against trafficking in human beings has been a priority of the police and the Prosecutor's Office since 2005. Media campaigns (about safe employment abroad, the rights of employees, etc.) are carried out almost every year for the purposes of prevention.

133. There have been several projects aimed at returning victims of trafficking in human beings to the labour market. The purpose of the EU EQUAL project "Integration of Women Involved in Prostitution Including Victims of Human Trafficking into the Legal Labour Market" 2005-2008 was the social and psychological rehabilitation of women involved in prostitution and returning them to the labour market. At present, trafficked women are helped to enter the labour market in cooperation with the service provider and the Unemployment Insurance Fund.

134. Victims of trafficking in human beings have been able to receive social, psychological and legal counselling, safe housing and health services. The number of victims of trafficking in human beings who received help was 76 in 2009, 57 in 2010, 56 in 2011 and 22 in 2012. The right to services until they are no longer needed was also stipulated in the Victim Support Act in 2013. The Social Insurance Board is the organising body of this service. 17 victims received services on the basis of the amended Victim Support Act and 39 victims in total were supported between 2013 and 2015. In addition to this, a state-funded helpline for the prevention of trafficking in human beings and victim counselling has been provided since 2007. The service is provided by the NGO Living for Tomorrow. The number of persons who received counselling was 371 in 2007; 416 in 2008; 639 in 2009; 643 in 2010; 667 in 2011; 671 in 2012; 558 in 2013; 497 in 2014; and 399 in 2015.

Article 11

Poverty (point 23)

135. According to Statistics Estonia, in 2015, 21.3% of the Estonian population or 280,300 lived in relative poverty and another 3.9% of the population or 51,300 people lived in absolute poverty.

136. In 2014, a person lived in relative poverty when his or her monthly equivalent net income was less than 394 euros (358 euros in 2013) and a person lived in absolute poverty if his or her monthly equivalent net income was less than 203 euros (205 euros in 2013). In comparison with 2013, the income of the population increased and the inequality of income decreased slightly. The incomes of the poorest and richest fifth of the population differed 6.2 times in 2014 and 6.6 times in 2013.

137. The threat of poverty is greater among unemployed people and people on low incomes. In 2014, one in every two unemployed persons lived in relative poverty and one in every three in absolute poverty. Although a permanent job reduces the risk of poverty most significantly, some employed people also experience poverty. In 2014, 8% of employed people lived in relative poverty and 2% lived in absolute poverty.

138. The relative poverty rate in 2014 was 19.6% among men and 23.3% among women, while the rate of absolute poverty was 7.3% and 5.4%, respectively. This means that more women live in relative poverty but more men live in absolute poverty, which indicates that poverty among men is more serious. The reason for this is the higher unemployment rate among men. The income of residents who are Estonians was higher than that of non-Estonians, with the relative poverty rate among Estonians in 2014 being six percentage points lower and the absolute poverty rate half a percentage point lower than among non-Estonians. The reason for this is that non-Estonians hold less paid jobs and their unemployment rate is higher due to their lower language skills. In 2014, 74% of households with one elderly member lived in relative poverty, but their poverty was not serious enough to reach absolute poverty. However, the situation is worse among single-parent households, 40% of which lived in relative poverty and 16% in absolute poverty. Families with many children also face a higher risk of poverty — the relative poverty rate of families with at least three children was 26%, while 15% lived in absolute poverty (the same indicators of families with two children were 14% and 6%). (See Table 17.)

139. The Welfare Development Plan 2016-2023, which covers social and labour policy development trends, has been prepared. Two general goals were set for the development plan:

- A high level of employment and quality working life; and
- A decrease in social inequality and poverty, alongside greater gender equality and increased social inclusion.

140. Reducing the relative poverty rate from the 21.6% (in 2014) to 15% by 2020 has been set as a goal in the development plan. Another goal is reducing the proportion of people living in absolute poverty from the 6.3% (2014) to 5.3 by 2020. The goals of the Welfare Development Plan comply with the Estonian competitiveness plan "Estonia 2020", which aims to reduce the proportion of people living in relative poverty primarily via measures that support higher levels of education and employment.

141. The sub-goals of the development plan have been established in a way that will help find solutions for supporting, in an integrated manner, the independent coping and opportunities of participating in social life of social risk groups (e.g. the elderly, disabled persons, ethnic minorities, people with special needs and people with coping problems) and how to better link the areas that help achieve these development plan goals.

142. The subsistence benefit is the state's financial aid for people in need which is paid in a situation where all other measures for alleviating poverty have proven inadequate. The subsistence limit that forms the basis of the subsistence benefit has been gradually increased since 2014. According to the State Budget Act of 2016, the subsistence level in 2016 for a person living alone or the first member and underage members of a family is 130 euros per month. The subsistence level of the second and every subsequent adult member of a family is 104 euros per month.

143. The subsistence level of each underage member of a family was equalised with the subsistence level of the first member of the family as of 2015. The subsistence level of the second and every subsequent adult member of a family is 80% of the subsistence level of the first member of the family.

144. As of 1 July 2013, needs-based family benefit is paid to families with children living below the income level of the needs-based family benefit and families with children that receive the subsistence benefit. The limit of the needs-based family benefit has also increased in recent years: as of 2015, it is 45 euros per month for families with one child and 90 euros per month for families with two or more children.

145. The new government that was sworn into office in autumn 2016 has decided to raise the subsistence level to 140 euros per month and to introduce a large family benefit of 200-370 euros per month.

Housing policy (point 22)

146. Estonia does not have a unitary housing policy document. The state's duty is to create conditions on the housing market (legal regulation, institutional organisation and support measures) that allow the owners and tenants of residential premises to solve their housing problems as independently as possible and to help the associations operating in the housing sector develop the sector. It is also important that labour and welfare policy measures support the implementation of housing policy.

147. The acquisition of housing, the reconstruction of dwellings and the improvement of living conditions are all supported. The target groups supported upon the implementation of the national housing policy are tenants living in residential premises returned in the course of the property reform, young specialists, young families, families with many children, veterans of the Defence Forces or the Defence League, associations and cooperatives of flat owners, local governments, specialists engaged in planning and developing the housing environment, persons who acquire energy-efficient housing and persons who reconstruct housing to make it energy-efficient.

148. The Estonian Housing Development Plan 2007-2013 was implemented in Estonia and a new development plan has not been prepared. The right to housing is supported via the measures of various development plans. Their goal is to guarantee the accessibility of housing and the improvement of living conditions. The goals are improving the conditions of acquiring a place of residence, improving the housing conditions of target groups, solving the housing problems of less privileged target groups on the housing market, improving the energy efficiency of buildings, increasing the accessibility of residential premises and improving the legal environment.

149. Grants and loan sureties for the renovation of blocks of flats have been developed in the Ministry of Social Affairs for the purpose of reducing the energy consumption of buildings. Over 600 blocks of flats were renovated with the state's support between 2009 and 2015. More than 100 million euros received from structural funds will be invested in making buildings more energy efficient between 2014 and 2020. This amount should be enough for the renovation of 1,000 blocks of flats.

150. 73 design contracts, 71 construction projects and 74 owner supervision contracts have been supported within the scope of the support measure of building design preparation and owner supervision.

151. 2,289 families with many children received home support between 2008 and 2015. This is non-repayable state support which is meant for improving the housing conditions of households. Approximately 2,800 households received support for the improvement of their living conditions between 2013 and 2015 within the scope of the support programme for sparsely populated regions.

152. 29,630 households received loan sureties between 2000 and 2015. The measure has made acquiring a home possible for households who lack the self-financing required for a home loan. The target group is young specialists, young families, tenants negatively affected by the property reform and veterans. Since 2016, sureties have also been offered to people buying energy-efficient homes or to persons who renovate their existing homes to make them energy efficient using the financial products of banks.

153. The public sector rental housing programme is being developed in order to diversify the provision of housing services. This will create support measures for increasing the volume of quality, energy-efficient rental housing in the most important employment areas. Housing is primarily necessary in local government units which struggle with market failure and where the private sector or local governments are unable to guarantee the accessibility of the contemporary housing required by various target groups. The measure will be used to support the construction of rental housing or the purchasing and reconstruction of existing housing.

Eviction and housing service

154. No statistical data about evictions are collected in Estonia.

155. Pursuant to the Social Welfare Act, local government bodies are obliged to ensure the possibility to use a dwelling to a person or family who is not capable of guaranteeing it for themselves or their family. The municipality, town or city government helps persons who struggle to move around inside their homes, to cope or to communicate, adapt their home according to their needs or find a more suitable place of residence.

156. The number of persons who use the housing service fluctuates annually. It was highest in 2011, when it exceeded the level of 2014 by 288 people (2.9%). In comparison with 2010, as the first year of the period covered by the overview, the number of housing service users increased by 360 people or 3.8% in 2014. The increase occurred on the account of people below retirement age (an increase of 386 people or 5.4%). The number of users with special needs increased by 175 people or 14.8%. (See Table 19.)

157. Local governments owned 7,209 municipal or social dwellings by the end of 2014 that could be used for the provision of the housing service. 4423 of them were flats and 2,786 were rooms. According to existing data, the share of adapted dwellings in the total number of dwellings during the entire period under review ranged from 4.6-5.0%. Between 2010 and 2014 on average 88-90% of the existing dwellings were occupied.

158. 2,248 families in total applied for housing at the end of 2014, 29 families among them needing adapted housing (1.3% of families applying for housing). In comparison with 2010, the number of families applying for housing increased by 229 families or 11.3% in 2014. 3,611 people in total needed the housing service at the end of 2014, which was 525 more people than in 2010. (See Table 20.)

Article 12

Health of elderly people (point 32b)

159. The share of persons covered by health insurance has remained stable at 94% since 2011. The share of persons covered by health insurance in the population in 2014 was 93.9% (90.9% of men and 96.5% of women). The number of working insured persons among persons covered by health insurance increased in 2014, related to the improvement in the employment situation. Over the years, the share of insured women has been 4-7% higher than the share of men. All persons aged over 65 are insured and medical help is accessible as required.

160. Those to whom a pension for incapacity for work or old-age pension has been granted pursuant to the Pension Insurance Act and insured persons aged over 63 receive compensation for dentures in the amount of 255.65 euros once every three years. As of 1 July 2016, this compensation is also paid to persons declared partially or fully incapacitated for work on the basis of the Work Capacity Allowance Act.

Abortions and teen pregnancies (point 24)

161. The number of abortions per 1,000 women of fertile age has decreased over the years. The absolute number dropped by 40% from 2006 to 2014 (from 11,647 to 6,943 cases). By age group, the highest number of abortions per 1,000 women is among those aged 20-34. In 2014, 3.3% of abortions were undertaken by women under 18 years of age (172 abortions). The average age of women who have an abortion has increased over the years: from 28.1 in 2004 to 29.7 in 2014.

162. Since 2000, young people have been provided with reproductive health counselling and services and psychological assistance by youth counselling centres, which are funded by the Health Insurance Fund and the state. The counselling centres are meant for men and women up to the age of 24. They can attend the counselling alone or as a couple. The centres also offer group work and lectures on sexual education. Gynaecologists, andrologists, psychologists, midwives and social workers are employed at the centres.

163. An online counselling service and quality guidelines for online sexual and reproductive health counselling were developed in 2014 and 2015 within the scope of the "Organisation of online counselling in sexual health and development of quality guidelines for online mental and reproductive health counselling" project, which in the future will serve as the basis for the definition and assessment of services and for the measurement of their quality.

Water quality (point 32a)

164. The total funding given to wastewater and drinking water supply systems (reconstruction and development of outdated systems) between 2005 and 2015 amounted to *ca* 1 billion euros. The investments aimed at improving the quality of drinking water have been effective. This is demonstrated by the drinking water quality indicators given in Table 21 of the Annex. However, there is still a need for investments by the state, as some smaller problematic water supply systems cannot find the funds necessary for reconstruction, and there are also sparsely populated areas that need to be connected to the public water supply or where such a supply needs to be developed. According to the data of the Health Board for 2015, approximately 86.15% of the population use water from the public water supply, but the coverage of people with the public water supply differs by region. The population density in Estonia is low and uneven, which is why the average investment per person required to meet water quality requirements is higher than in other EU countries. (See Table 21.)

165. In terms of non-compliance with the chemical indicators of drinking water, the main issue has been excessive fluoride content, but the permitted limit value of boron has also been exceeded at times. In general, the chemical indicators characterising the situation of drinking water have improved steadily due to the installation of water treatment equipment, the drilling of new drill wells and the connection of problematic water supply systems to systems where the water quality is good. According to the data of the Health Board for 2015, the indicators exceed the permitted limit values in the water of 90 public water supply systems (7.2%), which are used by 20,155 people or 1.83% of all users of public water supply systems. There are no problems with the microbiological non-compliance of drinking water. The radioactivity of the drinking water in the ground water of the Western and Northern Estonian Cumbrian-Vendian aquifer system has increased. A health risk assessment (cost and income analysis) is currently being developed in Estonia which should explain the scale of the risk posed to health by the radioactive substances in drinking water that are characteristic of Estonia and when it will be necessary to start taking measures for health protection.

166. A more detailed description of the situation in different regions is presented in the report drafted under Article 13 of Council Directive 98/83/EC on the quality of water intended for human consumption.[4]

Alcohol consumption (point 27)

167. In terms of alcohol consumption, Estonia is in the middle rankings among European countries (which means being one of the countries with the highest alcohol consumption in the world), but the damage caused by alcohol is considerably higher than average. There are *ca* 11% of addicts among working-age men and the deaths of 28% of working-age men and 12% of working age women are caused by alcohol.

168. Consumption by underage and young people has an important role in the development of alcohol damage, because underage consumption is the most important factor in the development of alcohol addiction in the future, and alcohol is also directly related to the three main causes of death among young people: traffic accidents, unintentional injuries and killings. Almost 85% of young people aged 15 in Estonia have consumed alcohol and almost half have been drunk.

[4] www terviseamet ee/fileadmin/dok/Keskkonnatervis/vesi/joogivesi/veevaerkide_aruanne_20112013 xls

169. Based on the data of health behaviour surveys among school students, there have been some long-awaited developments. Alcohol consumption and getting drunk for the first time now occurs at an older age. 62% of students had tried alcohol at the age of 13 or under in 2009/2010, but the same indicator in the 2013/2014 academic year was 49%. 24% of students aged 15 had got drunk at the age of 13 or under in 2009/2010, but the same indicator in the 2013/2014 academic year was 19%.

170. According to the Estonian Institute of Economic Research, alcohol consumption in Estonia increased constantly until 2008, dropped during the recession and increased again after the economy recovered, and did not change much until 2012. The indicator continued decreasing in 2013 and 2014, reaching 10.0 and 9.85 litres per person, respectively. The proportion of people who do not consume alcohol has increased each year. While 13% of men and 19% of women did not consume alcohol in 2007, the same indicators in 2014 were 17% and 26%, respectively. In 2012 Estonia ranked second among EU countries in terms of alcohol consumption per adult resident (more than 12 litres), as consumption exceeded the EU average by 1.2 times. Mortality as a result of diseases related to alcohol consumption and smoking is more than double the same indicator of the old EU Member States. The survey of the health behaviour of adults indicates that 29.6% of men and 9.2% of women consume alcohol at least a few times a week. (See Figure 6.)

171. The process of creating a single alcohol policy from the various alcohol-themed initiatives started in 2007. The Advertising Act, which restricted the content of alcohol advertisements, entered into force in 2008 and the prohibition on the sale of alcohol in shops during the night was also enforced. The nationwide procedure for the retail sale of alcohol, which allows for alcohol to be sold between 10:00 and 22:00, entered into force in the same year.

172. In 2009 the Government approved the general principles of alcohol policy, the implementation of the early detection of excessive alcohol consumption, brief counselling at the primary care level started and annual campaigns aimed at reducing alcohol consumption were also launched.

173. The preparation of the extensive cross-sectoral alcohol policy started in 2011. Many cross-sectoral cooperation projects were inspired by the inclusion process of the policy document which are aimed at the prevention of drink-driving and of sales of alcohol to minors and drunk persons. The national alcohol strategy or the green paper on alcohol policy was adopted in February 2014.

174. Treatment guidelines for patients with alcohol consumption disorders were prepared in 2015 and the programme "Sober and healthy Estonia" was also launched in order to develop the quality and improve the accessibility of the treatment of alcoholism.

175. The new government that was sworn into office in autumn 2016 has decided to raise the rate of excise duty on beer 70% and the rate of excise duty on wine and fermented beverages 45%. It has also decided to set further limitations on alcohol advertising.

Drug use (point 26)

176. Two surveys for the assessment of the size of the population group of injecting drug addicts have been carried out in Estonia (in 2007 and 2013). These surveys indicate that the number of injecting drug addicts in the 15-44 age group decreased from 13,886 in 2004 to 5,362 in 2009. The majority of injecting drug addicts live in Ida-Viru County and Harju County. There are nine organisations in Estonia that offer needle exchange and counselling services (in Tallinn, Maardu, Paldiski, Narva, Sillamäe, Kohtla-Järve, Jõhvi, Kiviõli, Tapa and Paide). The service is provided by way of stations and field visits. The total number of visits in 2015 was 129,719; there were 649 new clients, and 2,136,691 syringes were distributed. The volume of the service has remained the same in recent years.

177. Health service providers that hold licences in psychiatry treat drug addiction in Estonia. Drug treatment and rehabilitation is financed via the National Health Plan operational programme from the state budget and from the resources of larger local governments. Clients can also pay for their own treatment. The Health Insurance Fund does not finance drug treatment specifically. The Estonian treatment system is still mainly aimed

at the treatment and rehabilitation of opioid users and reducing the damage caused by opioid addiction.

178. Seven service providers provided maintenance therapy to opioid addicts in Estonia in 2015, with the service being provided in nine different locations and in 683 treatment places. Maintenance therapy for opioid addicts in prisons and in a detention house was also funded. The number of clients who received methadone maintenance therapy has increased in recent years. 1,008 addicts received maintenance therapy in 2008; 1,012 in 2009; 1,064 in 2010; 1,076 in 2011; 1,157 in 2012; and 1,165 in 2013.

179. One treatment centre in Tallinn provides inpatient treatment to adults. 47 persons completed addiction treatment according to plan in 2015. After inpatient treatment (which lasts for 2-4 weeks on average), the patient can continue with outpatient treatment for up to three months, which includes appointments with a psychologist and psychiatrist. Two centres (SA Sillamäe Narkorehabilitatsioonikeskus and SA Viljandi Haigla) provide national inpatient rehabilitation services; one of them treats male patients, the other both male and female patients. 147 persons entered treatment in 2015, 28 of them completing it successfully.

180. The share of deaths caused by drug overdoses is also a matter of concern. The number of drug-related deaths in Estonia has exceeded the limit of 100 since 2007 and was highest in 2012 (170 deaths). A decrease in the number of cases has been achieved since 2013 — the number of people who die as a result of an overdose was 111 in 2013 and 84 in 2015. The main reason why people overdose is the use of the illegally manufactured opioid fentanyl. While the majority of those who died as a result of drugs in 2006 were aged 20-24, the same indicator in 2014 was 30-34.

181. Information materials in Estonian and Russian have been prepared on the initiative of the National Institute for Health Development in order to prevent the use of drugs (e.g. "Drug information for parents"). The website www.narko.ee was created to provide information about drugs and the possible consequences of drug use.

182. The Police and Border Guard Board is carrying out the projects "Protect yourself and help others" and "A clean future". The first-mentioned project covers resisting peer pressure and saying no to addictive substances. 60% of all Grade 6 students participated in the project in 2015. The drug use prevention project "A clean future" provides support and social programmes for minors who have been caught taking drugs. 109 young people participated in the project in 2015. In addition, the Ministry of the Interior launched the project "Smart parent" in 2013 whose activities focus on the role of parents in the prevention of drug use and its consequences, as well as positive parenting in general. The website www.tarkvanem.ee at the centre of the project was visited by more than 80,000 people in 2015.

183. The Police and Border Guard Board and the Tax and Customs Board also attend meetings at schools, nursery schools and public events, where they regularly introduce their work with drug detection dogs. Addiction counselling is provided to young people and their parents by OÜ Corrigo and SA Tallinna Lastehaigla. OÜ Corrigo offers individual psychological counselling and family therapy to young people and parents (482 young people and 408 parents in 2015). SA Tallinna Lastehaigla (Tallinn Children's Hospital) organises therapy groups for minors with addiction problems and their parents. Telephone and family counselling is also provided. OÜ Corrigo organised 29 interactive drug prevention training events for 380 young people in 2015.

Tuberculosis (point 32c)

184. Prevention of tuberculosis continued in Estonia in 2007 as a national programme-based activity. The National Tuberculosis Prevention Programme for 2008-2012 was separately approved, and the relevant activities have been carried out on the basis of the National Health Plan for 2009-2020 since 2013.

185. The decrease in general morbidity of tuberculosis (TB) in Estonia has continued since 2007. 487 people with tuberculosis were registered in Estonia in 2007, but the number fell to 214 in 2015. The indicators of new cases of tuberculosis were 408 in 2007 and 166 in

2015, and the relevant morbidity coefficients per 100,000 residents were 30.4 (2007) and 14 (2015).

186. The number of HIV-positive persons suffering from tuberculosis increased every year until 2007, but has decreased since 2007. 47 HIV-positive people with tuberculosis were registered in 2007, the same figure in 2015 was 21. The earlier forecast of a new tuberculosis epidemic among HIV-positive people in Estonia has, therefore, not come about, in spite of fears. Approximately 95% of people with tuberculosis have been tested for HIV. The proportion of HIV-positive TB sufferers is still relatively high in comparison with other countries, but considering the very high general prevalence of HIV in Estonia, it can be said that a tuberculosis epidemic among HIV-positive people has so far been prevented. The proportion of HIV-positive tuberculosis sufferers among all TB sufferers ranged from 9-13% in different years.

187. The number of cases of multi-drug-resistant tuberculosis (MDR-TB) has also decreased since 2007. In 2007 83 cases of MDR-TB were registered in Estonia, 52 of which were new cases; the relevant indicators in 2015 were 37 and 19. The number of registered cases of extensively drug-resistant TB (XDR TB) was 14 in 2007 and seven in 2015.

188. Men aged 30-60 continued to comprise the largest share of tuberculosis sufferers in Estonia. New cases of TB in 2015 amounted to 166; 89 of the people affected were men aged 30-60 (*ca* 54% of all new cases). TB morbidity among children remains very low in Estonia and is limited to single cases (two children under the age of nine in 2015), which are mainly related to the threat of contracting it from a family member.

189. Morbidity in prisons is decreasing as per the decrease in general TB morbidity. Nine persons with TB were registered in prisons in 2015: four of the cases were discovered by way of prophylactics, and two were HIV-positive.

190. The main achievement of the reporting period is the efficient functioning of the current treatment, which has guaranteed a decrease in permanent tuberculosis morbidity in Estonia. The treatment results of sufferers have also improved and the share of those who discontinue treatment has decreased slightly, which has, in turn, reduced the risk of the infection spreading further in society as well as the probability of the development of new drug-resistant strains.

191. According to the final report of the TB-related joint visit of the WHO and the ECDC (European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control) carried out in 2010, Estonia has managed to contain the tuberculosis epidemic and is moving towards becoming a country with low morbidity.

192. However, Estonia is still characterised by a rather large proportion of HIV+ sufferers and MDR-TB. The ratio of the latter is one of the highest in the EU. More than half of tuberculosis sufferers belong to risk groups, incl. alcohol abusers, drug addicts, HIV-positive people, the homeless, unemployed people and people who have been held in detention facilities. This, in turn, makes the case management of the average tuberculosis sufferer more complicated, and the prospects of treatment become more modest. In order to ensure that tuberculosis morbidity continues to decrease, solutions are sought in cooperation with other authorities to motivate patients in risk groups to continue treating their tuberculosis consistently and to reduce the number of people who discontinue treatment. The development of new TB treatment guidelines started in 2015 in consideration of the specific features of tuberculosis morbidity in Estonia, incl. the decrease in general morbidity and the co-centration of morbidity in risk groups.

Mental health (point 25)

193. The proportion of people who felt depressed in the last 30 days has decreased in recent years (since 2012) among men and women alike, and the share of people who have thought about suicide in the last 12 months has also decreased.

194. The responses of people who had been depressed were divided as follows in 2014: 37% no more than before; 15.3% somewhat more than before; and 6.9% much more than before. (See Tables 22-23.)

195. According to data on loss of health from 2015, mental and behavioural disorders comprised 5% of lost years of life (5% for men and 5.5% for women).

196. The number of new cases of psychiatric disease per 100,000 residents decreased among men and women alike during the period under review (10% total; 12% among men and 8% among women).

197. The main new cases of psychiatric disorders in 2015 were neurotic, stress-related and somatoform (33%) and mood disorders (22%). (See Tables 24-25.)

198. Tallinn Children's Mental Health Centre has been established. Child psychiatrists have started providing their services at regional children's mental health centres. The mental health centres at the Põlva, Valga, Southern Estonian and Narva hospitals, launched with the support of Tartu University Hospital and the North Estonian Medical Centre, have also started providing outpatient child psychiatry services. The Ministry of Social Affairs has prepared a concept of mental health services for children, and the Estonian Mental Health and Well-Being Coalition has prepared the Mental Health Strategy for 2016-2025. A report that highlights the main shortcomings of the system and offers initial directions for the creation of services has been prepared. Testing the "Incredible Years" parenting programme will continue within the scope of the "Risk children and young people" programme. The programme supports the promotion of parenting skills and thereby the prevention and reduction of mental health disorders among children, as well as the prevention of abuse.

199. The Estonian Mental Health and Well-Being Coalition, which represents the organisations operating in the area of mental health, was established in 2013. The Coalition focused on the development of a single mental health strategy in 2015. It was delivered to the Ministry of Social Affairs in 2016 and the integration of the suggested activities in the state's action plans is ongoing.

Article 13

Education

Bullying at schools (point 12c)

200. Reducing bullying is one of the priorities of the Estonian Lifelong Learning Strategy. The use of evidence-based bullying prevention programmes at schools and nursery schools is supported for the achievement of this goal. The goal is to guarantee bullying prevention programmes in all nursery schools and 90% of schools by 2020. Research and evidence-based bullying prevention programmes were used in 67% of nursery schools and 35% of basic schools as at the end of 2015.

201. Activities, goals and principles specifically aimed at fight against bullying have been consolidated into the "Education without bullying" concept of the Ministry of Education and Research, which was approved in 2017. For the first time, the concept presents a complete vision of programme-based prevention of bullying to make these activities accessible to nursery schools and schools. Bullying prevention programmes from nursery schools to upper secondary schools and vocational schools are described in the concept. Nursery schools and schools can select the most suitable bullying prevention activities from the concept. The concept supports the achievement of the Estonian Lifelong Learning Strategy and the Strategy for the Prevention of Violence. Four times more resources than before have been planned for the implementation of the concept.

202. A number of development trends have also been agreed on, including: extending the anti-bullying activities from Estonian-language schools to non-Estonian schools, vocational educational institutions and parents; turning more attention to communication and conflict-solving skills in the formal and in-service training of teachers; developing a model for funding anti-bullying programmes; increasing capacity to intervene in cyber-bullying; and expanding the bullying-free education network. Intervention programmes, such as "No more bullying!", plus a game of behavioural skills and peace of mind exercises have been developed; the principles of value-based education have been emphasised; and students are

being included in the achievement of a safer learning environment (the support-student movement 1:1001 and Tolerant School).

Education in foreign languages (point 30)

203. Pursuant to the Basic Schools and Upper Secondary Schools Act that entered into force in 2010, the language of instruction in upper secondary schools is Estonian, but a different language may be the language of instruction with the permission of the Government in a school or in certain classes at the school. The transition of Russian-language schools to studies in Estonian has taken place gradually at the upper secondary school level and is flexible from the first year of upper secondary school (Grade 10). Russian-language basic schools will be retained in Estonia and the school will organise language and cultural studies for students whose native language is not Estonian or who speak a language different from the language of the curriculum at home which is the native language of at least one parent, if this is requested by at least 10 students with the same native language or language of communication at home. The creation of possibilities for language and cultural studies was established by the Government of Estonia; the acquisition of materials and the studies themselves are supported by the Ministry of Education and Research.

204. International support for the acquisition of the Estonian language has been requested in order to give all students equal opportunities to continue their education, as poor Estonian skills have been one of the most serious problems in the case of people whose native language is not Estonian. Support has been received from the EU, Norway, the United States of America and Canada within the scope of the national integration programme.

205. The language and culture studies of ethnic minorities are also supported in the Sunday schools of ethnic minorities that operate as part of cultural societies.

206. Pursuant to Section 29 of the Vocational Educational Institutions Act the language of instruction is the language in which at least 60% of the studies is carried out. The language of instruction of vocational education is Estonian. The decision about the language in the case of other curricula is made by the school's manager. If studies under a curriculum are not taking place in Estonian, the school must guarantee Estonian language proficiency at the level required for working in the speciality acquired. 38% of institutions that provide vocational education have Russian-language study groups in addition to Estonian ones, and in one vocational educational institution it is possible to study in English or Latvian.

207. The decision about the language of instruction at the level of higher education is made by the school. Estonian dominates as the language of instruction in the state-owned educational institutions of Estonia. Data on the native language of students is not collected at the level of higher education in Estonia. 65% of graduates of Russian-language secondary schools and 63% of graduates of Estonian-language secondary schools started studying in state-commissioned student places in 2006. The language of instruction of public-law universities and state-owned institutions of professional higher education is determined by law (Section 22, sub-section 8 of the Universities Act and Section 17 of the Institutions of Professional Higher Education Act). The language of instruction is Estonian; the use of other languages is decided by the university's council or the Minister of Education and Research. The language of instruction of 87% of students in the 2015/2016 academic year was Estonian. The importance of Russian is decreasing, but the importance of English continues to increase, especially at the second and third levels of higher education. This is primarily the result of an increase in the number of foreign students (their share in the 2015/2016 academic year being 6.8%).

Dropping out (point 29)

208. The proportion of dropouts in basic schools (Grades 1-9) in the years under review was *ca* 0.9% of all students. Two-thirds of all dropouts are boys. The proportion of dropouts at the upper secondary school level is 1.6%. Male students comprise 50-55% of these dropouts. (See Table 26.)

209. Dropping out remains a problem in vocational education as well. For example, just 47.7% of students who started acquiring vocational education in 2011 had completed their studies within the standard period of study by 2014. The general rate of dropping out of vocational education in the 2013/2014 academic year was 21.8% and 19.4% in vocational secondary education. The general dropout rate in 2015 decreased to 20.3%. (See Table 27.)

210. Provision of support services is an important measure in reducing dropouts. The Vocational Education Act of 2013 stipulates for the first time the obligation to guarantee the accessibility of support services as a duty of the school. The education and career counselling programme of the national Lifelong Learning Strategy 2020, implemented since 2014, is used for the central organization of support services, which supported the establishment of the Rajaleidja (Pathfinder) centres providing education counselling and career services in all counties. The Pathfinder centres provide primary and secondary level services.

Proportion of female students (point 11)

211. The proportion of female students among learners has decreased somewhat in recent years (from 61.7% in the 2007/2008 academic year to 58.7% in the 2015/2016 academic year). The proportion of female students in the 2015/2016 academic year was smallest in professional higher education (56%) and largest in Master's studies (63%). In comparison with the 2007/2008 academic year, the proportion of female students has decreased most in professional higher education and increased in integrated Bachelor's and Master's studies. (See Figure 7.)

Article 15

Accessibility of culture (point 31)

Digitalization of culture

212. The accessibility of several cultural services has improved due to their digitalisation.

213. The description of *ca* 2.8 million museum pieces (i.e. *ca* 37% of the state's museum collections) had been entered in the information system of museums as at the end of 2015; 500,000 of them include a digital image, which makes a considerable part of cultural heritage accessible to everyone online.

214. The Estonian National Library is increasingly operating as a library network development centre. All libraries that offer public services have free Internet services and the accessibility of national publications in e-catalogues, digital archives and databases has increased.

215. The Legal Deposit Copy Act entered into force on 1 January 2017. It updates the transfer, collection and preservation of publications of importance to Estonian culture. The Act requires the collection and preservation of all publications also in digital format. This will lay the foundation for the digital archive of cultural heritage, providing easier access to information.

216. National e-publications can be read in the portal of the Estonian National Library (www.digar.ee) and the ELIIS e-book environment of Tallinn Central Library (e-lib.kesklinnaraamatukogu.ee). In 2018 the Estonian Libraries Network Consortium merged the e-catalogues of Tallinn and Tartu, which allows people to find data in the joint e-catalogue of 16 larger Estonian libraries (ENUF (www.enut.ee)) by doing just one search.

Protection of the cultural rights of people with special needs and elderly people

217. The majority of cultural institutions have guaranteed wheelchair access. The website (liikumisraadus.sm.ee/et) is meant for people with mobility disabilities looking for information about access to social (incl. cultural) sites in larger cities and throughout Estonia.

218. Many theatres have installed systems for people with hearing impairments that allow them to listen to the sound coming from the stage directly in their hearing aids.

219. A requirement was added to the rules of support distribution of the Estonian Film Institute in 2014 which states that all feature-length films, animated films and documentaries longer than 50 minutes must have subtitles for people with hearing and visual impairments.

220. The Online Library of the Estonian Library for the Blind was opened in 2012, allowing readers to download and stream more than 3,100 audio books, newspapers and magazines. The establishment of the Online Library took the servicing of people with visual impairments or other disabilities, disorders or illnesses that prevent them from reading ordinary texts to a new level. Improving the reading opportunities of people with impaired vision continues with the digitalisation and dubbing of publications and making them accessible to such people.

221. The Ministry of Culture supports the issuing of audio books for the blind via the Estonian Literature programme.

222. Performance establishments, the State Concert Institute Eesti Kontsert and museums sell discounted tickets to the elderly to make cultural services more accessible to them. Cultural establishments also offer discounts to families, children, young people and disabled people.

223. Estonian Public Broadcasting (ERR) broadcasts news in sign language. ERR started transmitting audio subtitles in 2013, which primarily help people with visual impairments to follow TV shows.

224. Every week, ETV broadcasts the TV show "Prillitoos", which is about and for the elderly, providing information about social welfare, pensions, health care, healthy eating and exercise and showcasing the social and hobby activities of the elderly.

Disadvantaged and excluded persons

225. Performance establishments, the State Concert Institute Eesti Kontsert and museums sell discounted tickets to pensioners and less privileged groups to make cultural services more accessible to them. Cultural establishments also offer permanent discounts to families, children, young people and disabled people.

226. Eesti Kontsert, the Estonian Cultural Endowment and local governments work together to bring concerts to rural regions. The Gambling Tax Council supports priority music projects which take place outside Tallinn and are aimed at target groups whose access to musical events is limited, e.g. young and less privileged people and ethnic minorities living in Ida-Viru County. The Ministry of Culture supports two municipal collectives — Pärnu City Symphonic Orchestra and Narva City Symphonic Orchestra — to the value of 60,000 euros due to regional considerations.

227. The Museums Act established new requirements for tickets as of 1 January 2014: free admission for children up to the age of 8, disabled persons up to the age of 16 and their companions, and persons with severe disabilities aged 16 and over and their companions. A joint discount ticket is offered to families: up to two adults with underage children. The requirement is obligatory for state museums and the state's foundations, and optional for other museums.

228. The Gambling Tax Council supports priority music projects which take place outside Tallinn and are aimed at target groups whose access to musical events is limited, e.g. young and less privileged people and ethnic minorities living in Ida-Viru County.

229. A lower VAT rate (9%) is applied to books and periodicals pursuant to the Value Added Tax Act.

Situation of ethnic minorities (point 30)

Legal framework

230. The rights of persons belonging to ethnic minorities in Estonia are guaranteed by the Constitution and the Equal Treatment Act. The Constitution of the Republic of Estonia stipulates that everyone has the right to preserve their national identity. Ethnic minorities have the right to establish self-governing agencies in the interests of their cultures pursuant to the conditions and procedure stipulated in the Cultural Autonomy Act. Two ethnic minorities currently have cultural autonomy: Ingrian Finns and Estonian Swedes.

231. The Constitution of the Republic of Estonia also guarantees protection against discrimination on the basis of nationality, race, colour, gender, language, origins, religion, political or other views, property or social status, and on other grounds.

232. Instigating national racial, religious or political hatred, violence and discrimination is against the law and punishable in Estonia. Instigating hatred, violence and discrimination between different layers of society is also prohibited by law. The Equal Treatment Act guarantees protection against discrimination on the grounds of nationality (ethnic origin), race, colour, religion or other beliefs, age, disability or sexual orientation, and establishes the principles of equal treatment, duties in the implementation and promotion of the principle of equal treatment and the resolution of discrimination disputes.

233. The use of languages in spheres of public life in Estonia is regulated by the Language Act. In local governments where at least half of the permanent residents belong to a national minority, everyone has the right to approach state agencies operating in the corresponding local government area and local government authorities and receive from the agencies and from the officials and employees thereof responses in the language of the national minority, besides responses in Estonian. In local governments where the majority of permanent residents are non-Estonian speakers, the language of the permanent residents constituting the majority of the permanent residents of the local government may be used alongside Estonian as the internal public administration language of the local government on the proposal of the corresponding local government council and by a decision of the Government of Estonia. Irrespective of the proportion of different ethnic groups in a region, ethnic minorities may, by agreement between the parties, use their native language in communication with the officials and employees of state agencies and local government authorities as well as in the foreign representations of the Republic of Estonia and with notaries, bailiffs and sworn translators and in their offices. All ministries and state agencies have Russian and English websites in addition to Estonian ones. The newspapers of local governments in Tallinn, Harju County and Ida-Viru County are published in both Estonian and Russian, and the websites of these local governments are also multilingual.

234. The Language Act stipulates that the regional version or translation of the text into a foreign language may be added to public information — public signs, signposts, announcements, notices, advertisements, etc. — on condition that the text in Estonian is at the forefront and not less observable than the text in the foreign language.

235. The services of the Unemployment Insurance Fund are also guaranteed in Russian in regions with many residents whose native language is not Estonian.

236. Service in Russian and English is also provided in the banking and business sectors, in medicine and by the police. Agencies that provide public services are increasingly interested in hiring employees who speak Russian and English in addition to Estonian.

237. Pursuant to the Language Act, the state also promotes the use and development of sign language and signed Estonian in addition to the Estonian language. An interpreting service is guaranteed for deaf and hearing-impaired persons in oral communication with officials or employees of state agencies, incl. in foreign representations of Estonia and local government agencies and before notaries, bailiffs and sworn translators or in their offices, in cultural autonomy bodies and other institutions, commercial undertakings, non-profit organisations and foundations registered in Estonia.

Preservation of cultural identity

238. Over 300 cultural societies of ethnic minorities and 20 umbrella organisations of cultural societies were operating in Estonia in 2015.

239. The Ministry of Culture has been responsible for the establishment of conditions for the development of the cultural life of the ethnic minorities living in Estonia and their integration in Estonian society since 2009. Activities of cultural societies aimed at preserving and showcasing their culture are supported from the budget of the Ministry of Culture via the Integration Foundation (MISA). Cultural societies can apply to have the operating expenses of the organisations, i.e. base financing, covered via umbrella organisations. An umbrella organisation is an organisation that unites at least five cultural societies of ethnic minorities and carries out activities aimed at the sustainable functioning and systematic development of organisations representing ethnic cultures. The budget of MISA's call for proposals in 2015 was 370,000 euros. The Ministry of Culture also finances a support programme for the cultural societies of ethnic minorities aimed at the preservation of the cultures and languages of ethnic minorities and supporting integration. This programme has been implemented by MISA since 2016. 31 societies received funding from the programme to the value of 90,500 euros in 2016. 41,000 euros was allocated to the Estonian Swedish Culture Foundation from the cultural autonomy support programme to cover their operating expenses in 2015 and 2016.

240. Some ethnic minorities have established museums that showcase their culture: the Russian Museum has branches in both Tallinn and Kohtla-Järve, while there are also Estonian Swedish, Chuvash and Jewish museums in Tallinn. Municipal museums that showcase the cultural heritage and history of the Russian Old Believers living by Lake Peipus in Eastern Estonia operate in Kolkja and Varnja (Peipsiääre Municipality in Tartu County) and Mustvee (Jõgeva County). Russian and Ukrainian cultural centres also operate in Tallinn. There is an Estonian Swedish church museum at St Michael's Swedish Church in Tallinn and a museum of Coastal Swedes in Haapsalu. The Seto Farm Museum operates in Värska in Põlva County, showcasing the farm culture of the Seto people. The museum has branches in Saatse and Obinitsa.

241. Showcasing the culture and languages of Finno-Ugric peoples is supported by Fenno-Ugria Asutus, which is the umbrella organisation for organisations interested in cooperating with Finno-Ugric and Samoyed peoples or primarily engaged in the movement of Finno-Ugric kindred nations. Fenno-Ugria Asutus organises kindred nations days every October.

242. The cultural activities of ethnic minorities are also supported by the Ministry of Education and Research, the Estonian Folk Culture Centre, the Gambling Tax Council and local governments.

243. Since 2016 MISA has been supporting the acquisition of technical equipment by 13 theatres and museums to allow them to provide their services (shows, exhibitions, etc.) in Russian and English, thereby increasing the opportunities of people who have not integrated well to participate in the cultural life of Estonia. In addition to the private Russian-language TV channels operating in Estonia, Estonian Public Broadcasting launched the Russian-language channel ETV+ in autumn 2015.

244. The most popular Russian-language radio channels are Russkoje Radio and Radio 4, the latter of which is a public channel which, in addition to its programme in Russian, regularly transmits shows in other minority languages.

245. Four national periodicals in Russian are published in Estonia, and regional publications in Russian are available in the regions of Estonia where the residents are mostly Russian-speaking. All larger media groups and institutions provide an extensive online media service to the Russian-speaking population in their own language. Three Russian-language literary and cultural magazines publish the works of Russian and Estonian Russian writers, and six publishing houses regularly publish Russian literature. About 20 different magazines are published in Russian in Estonia each year. The Ministry of Culture, the Cultural Endowment and the Gambling Tax Council support the publication of cultural magazines in Russian and the translation of Estonian children's and young adult

literature into Russian. The publishing houses of institutions of higher education publish scientific works in Russian and English.

246. According to Statistics Estonia, 328 different magazines were published in Estonia in 2015, of which 278 (85%) were in Estonian. The number of newspapers published was 118, incl. 12 dailies. 81 newspapers were published in Estonian and 37 in other languages.

247. According to Statistics Estonia, two public TV channels (three as of 2015, one of them in Russian), one local government channel and 11 private channels broadcast their programmes in Estonia in 2014.

248. Estonian Public Broadcasting has five radio stations, one of which transmits classical music and another of which has a Russian-language programme. 35 radio stations in total operated in 2014: five of them were national, 14 regional, 15 local and one international.

249. The proportion of programmes in Russian among radio programmes in 2014 was 26.4% of total production and 15.2% among the total volume of TV programmes (24% and 0.7%, respectively, in 2005). The volume of Russian TV programmes increased significantly after the launch of a Russian-language TV channel in 2015.

Research (point 32g)

250. Researchers can apply for funding for their projects via various financing instruments. The money is collected on the basis of competition proceeding from quality indicators. The total volume of funding research and development in Estonia increased from 1.07% of GDP in 2007 to 1.44% of GDP in 2014. The success of the research carried out in Estonia is evidenced by the almost two-fold increase in the number of articles in international peer-reviewed publications: 1,069 in 2007 compared to 2,041 in 2014.

251. Protection of intellectual property is guaranteed for researchers and engineers, giving them the opportunity to implement their scientific discoveries, inventions, etc. in practice. Protection documents — which in Estonia are letters patent for inventions and certificates for trademarks, utility models and industrial design solutions — are issued by the Estonian Patent Office. The results of the scientific research financed from the state budget funds which do not involve intellectual property rights are public information and any profit from such results is invested in research and development, the spreading of the results thereof or in teaching.

252. Research, scientific education, innovation, a scientific view of the world and ethical core values are promoted using all of the options offered by mass media (online portals for research news and the popularisation of science, the Estonian Research Information System (ETIS), radio, television and printed media, research centres and museums, etc.).

253. Support is granted to research societies and the Science Centre AHHAA, the Energy Discovery Centre and other centres that showcase science for the general public, as well as technology and nature centres for young people, the science associations of students, the Science School of the University of Tartu, the Technology School of Tallinn University of Technology, the Student Academy of Tallinn University, etc., and national and international Olympiads.